



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

Memorandum

To: Acting Chief of PSHSB

From: Julius Genachowski

Date: June 30, 2009

When disaster strikes, the ability to communicate is essential. The FCC plays a key role in ensuring our nation's telecommunications infrastructure is robust and resilient. In the event of a major crisis, the Commission should be prepared to act decisively, within the scope of its jurisdiction, to enable communication among emergency responders and among citizens. Accordingly, as one of my very first acts as Chairman, I am directing the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, in consultation with other Bureaus and Offices, to conduct a top-to-bottom review of the FCC's preparedness for a major public emergency.

Within 30 days, the PSHSB should prepare a briefing to the Chairman's Office that addresses the following questions:

1. Describe the FCC's emergency management plan, including:
 - a. FCC's main functions during a crisis
 - i. Crises affecting significant communications infrastructure
 - ii. Crises affecting FCC/government continuity of operations
 - b. Organization, roles and responsibilities, chain of command
 - c. Interfaces / relationships with outside groups, such as:
 - i. FEMA, other federal agencies, state and local agencies
 - ii. Telecommunications service providers
 - iii. Other critical infrastructure providers
 - d. Command-and-control infrastructure (including backup redundancies)
 - i. Operations centers
 - ii. Field agents
 - iii. Lines of communication

2. Describe the FCC's approach to emergency preparedness and continuity training exercises, including:
 - a. Schedule of training exercises (recent and planned)
 - b. Description of training exercises and who is involved
 - c. Results / performance (or underperformance) in most recent exercise(s)
 - d. "Lessons learned" and corrective action items for each of the exercises and progress to-date on implementing those actions
3. Describe any real-world incidents over the past 5 years that required the FCC to initiate its emergency plan (including false alarms)
 - a. What was the incident?
 - b. What was the agency's response?
 - c. How did the agency perform?
 - d. What improvements were identified as a result of each incident or problems with the FCC's performance and what is the progress towards implementing the improvements or corrective action?
4. Describe ongoing proactive efforts to prevent communications failures in large-scale emergencies
 - a. Monitoring the nation's telecommunications infrastructure
 - b. Assessment of infrastructure survivability
 - c. Any known weak spots of special concern
5. Describe any efforts of the FCC to detect or respond to a cyber attack
 - a. Proactive steps taken with the carriers
 - b. Agency response plans
6. Describe any efforts of the FCC to prepare for or respond to a public health emergency, such as a pandemic
 - a. Steps to keep the agency operational if health risks cause the offices to close
 - b. Steps to keep the national communications infrastructure operational

7. What risks and gaps in capabilities for emergency preparedness exist (*e.g.*, personnel, budget/monetary, procedures, training/exercises, legal/policy, other)?
8. What outside critiques and evaluations have been made of the FCC's handling of emergency situations and incidents? (*e.g.*, GAO, Inspector General, industry analysts, media, other government entities)
9. What else we should know about the FCC's emergency preparedness?

The intent of this briefing is to illuminate issues that may need prompt attention from the Chairman. We expect the briefing to be conducted in a spirit of candor and open discussion. We recognize the hard work of the PSHSB in leading the FCC's emergency preparations and thank you in advance for your efforts in preparing this briefing. Please direct any questions to Bruce Gottlieb in the Chairman's Office.